

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWING

The attached replacement sheet including Fig. 1 replaces the first original sheet of the Drawings. Fig. 1 is amended.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present Amendment under 37 C.F.R. §1.111 is responsive to the non-final Office Action mailed December 23, 2008 in the above-identified application.

New claim 12 is added. Therefore, claims 1-12 are the claims currently pending in the present application.

Claims 1-11 are amended to clarify features recited thereby. These amendments are fully supported by Applicant's disclosure.

Objection to the Drawings

Figure 1 of the Drawings is objected to on the ground that a legend such as "Prior Art" should be included.

Figure 1 is amended.

Objection to the Specification

The Specification is objected to on the ground that the reference to claim 1 on page 1 should be removed, and on the ground that headings should be included in the Specification.

Page 1 of the Specification contains no reference to claim 1 and this portion of the objection appears to be erroneous.

The Specification is amended to include section headings.

Rejection of Claims 1, 3, 7, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3, 7, 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious from Thomas, U.S. Patent No. 5,224,798 in view of either Bulkley et al., U.S. Patent No. 2,308,743 or Evans, U.S. Patent No. 4,456, 404. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 requires a structure for decommissioning and transporting an offshore fixed oil production platform, the structure comprising a shuttle positionable along the lifting legs and operable to move one of the framework elements of the production platform, said shuttle comprising elements, each element comprising a mechanical drive positioned on the associated lifting leg, and operable to drive the respective element independently of the remaining elements.

Thomas discloses a device for overloading a jack-up oil platform including a hull provided with a first device for applying an overload on the leg, and a second overload device (Thomas, Abstract). Thomas discloses that these additional loading devices comprise removable reservoir 11 supported by each carrying structure 9 for the jack mechanism 5 of each leg.

Thomas does not disclose or suggest a shuttle positionable along the lifting legs and operable to move one of the framework elements of the production platform, the shuttle comprising elements that are independently operable, as required by claim 1.

Bulkley discloses a support system for a barge and for transporting well drilling equipment and firmly supporting the equipment at the well location. Bulkley discloses that the barge is equipped with a suitable number of upstanding bearings 5, and that the platform 10 is mounted on the barge to support the derrick and drilling equipment, that the platform 10 is wider than the barge and the bearings, and that the legs 7 are mounted on the side margins of the platform. Bulkley teaches that the braces 6 are firmly secured to the platform.

Thus, Bulkley teaches that the braces are not independent of each other. Accordingly, Bulkley does not cure the above-discussed deficiencies of Thomas as they relate to the above-noted features of claim 1.

Evans discloses an offshore drilling and production work in which jacking towers 54 are firmly fixed to the working platform.

Evans does not disclose or suggest a shuttle positionable along the lifting legs and operable to move one of the framework elements. Further, Evans does not disclose or suggest such a shuttle including independently operable elements for each respective lifting leg, as further required by claim 1. Accordingly, even taken together in combination, Thomas, Bulkley and Evans do not disclose or suggest the recitations of claim 1.

Claims 3 and 7 depend from claim 1 and are therefore patentably distinguishable over the cited art for at least the same reasons. Claim 9 now depends from claim 8, which is patentably distinguishable over the cited art for reasons given in the following section of the present Amendment. Claim 11 now depends from claim 10, which the Office Action states is allowed.

Rejection of Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious from WO document '425 in view of either Bulkley et al., or Evans. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 8 require a shuttle positionable along the lifting legs and operable to move one of the framework elements of the production platform and comprising elements, each element comprising a mechanical drive operable to drive the respective element independently of the remaining elements.

WO '425 discloses a shuttle 30 which can be displaced along the lifting legs 12 by the hull.

However, WO '425 does not disclose or suggest that each element of the shuttle may be displaced alone, as required by claims 1 and 8. As discussed, Bulkley and Evans also do not disclose or suggest such features. Accordingly, even taken together in combination, WO '425, Bulkley and Evans do not disclose or suggest the recitations of claims 1 and 8.

Claims 2-4 and 7 depend from claim 1, and claim 9 depends from claim 8. Therefore, claims 2-4, 7 and 9 are patentably distinguishable over the cited art for at least the same reasons as their respective base claims. Claim 11 now depends from claim 10, which the Office Action states is allowed.

New Claim

New claim 12 is added so as more fully to claim patentable aspects of applicant's invention. New claim 12 is fully supported by applicant's disclosure, see, for example, Fig. 2.


New claim 12 depends from claim 1 and is therefore patentably distinguishable over the cited art for at least the same reasons.

In view of the foregoing discussion, withdrawal of the objections and rejections and allowance of the claims of the application are respectfully requested.

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